westwords

Westwords

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EDITOR: Patricia Wedemeyer

STAFF:

Layout -- Patricia Wedemeyer
Art -- Mary Louise Revillard
Diane Clark
Copy -- Pat Crampton
Jane Adams
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Stella Muro
Sherri Waterman
Marilyn Berutto
Olivia Grieco
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On Epiphanies

Going around the cycle of the year's festivals is like spiralling around a mountain. One sees the same vistas, but each time from higher up the mountain, with a changed perspective. Westwords with this issue celebrates its second anniversary. Certainly one can see the ascent of the mountain when one compares issues and sees the increasing maturity of the writing that appears. Since it is the anniversary, it might be well to comment, as we did in our first issue on the meaning of the name, Westwords.

Westwords means that the Mount stands on the western brink of America with its feet feeling the Pacific. It means that the Mount's long tradition of well crafted words moves forward and further. It means futurity, moving into new adventures with words--pioneering, westering. Creative words, reflective words spring from minds illumined by the Spirit who broods over the bent world ordering creation into peace. Such words shine into men's minds, bringing manifestations, bringing epiphanies to wise men, to men thoughtful enough to search out goodness, truth, beauty.

Today's festival is a recurrence in our lives of the Wise Men's grace: the sudden seeing of glory, the epiphany of God made visible. But God makes himself visible in many ways: first of all in His Eternal Word, His Son whom the Magi came to see. But epiphanies come to us also from the beauty of the world which we see from the Mount, and in the wisdom of human words--our words--which echo mysteriously the Word spoken by God the Father--a word expressing His being.

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Sister Mary Paul, S.S.L.

After reading Dylan Thomas

About this time of year, when California January has the flavor of Irish May, I like to read Dylan Thomas' Quite Early One Morning. Then, if I can find a green place on a hill and an hour or two to dream, I have little trouble in bringing a whirling other-world about me--memories of childhood without order and without end.

Our town was a West of Ireland river town--old as Saint Patrick himself (for hadn't we his holy well to prove it?), stretching lazily along both banks of the salmon-rich Moy, where gaping boys and girls lazed long afternoons away, watching the dark-capped fishermen haul in the heavy nets, club the shining catch, and throw the fish over their shoulders into slippery piles under the river wall: swam in defiance of parental threats the whole width of the salmon weir, or waded, in equally tempting and forbidden waters, under the steaming spray of the great Downhill waterfall. There housewives hung about on market Mondays to hear the "standings' men" call their ware--"Chipped china from Arklow, Ma'am, fourpence a cup and saucer," and tinkermen roared at one another in ancestral hate across the length of the Ardnaree Bridge.

Never was there such a town as ours, I thought, for places to go and things to do, and grandmothers. If leprechauns with bags of gold did not appear at the place where the rainbow ran aground among the blue-bells in the Station Road Wood, there was always the chance that one of the fierce Fir Bolgs would appear at the Giant's Table on Primrose Hill. A thousand failures to produce a giant only made us surer that if we lay long enough under the cairn, and held our breaths while we recited all the verses of "The Celts," at least one fearsome monster would be seated at the table when we scrambled out into the sunlight. If our spell failed we could wander out to Callaghan's race-track where the great long-legged colts dashed the length of the field and back again; and then we could run with them on the other side of the fence, and run, and run, until we could run no more, but had to tumble panting in the summer meadow, while the colts ran on and whinnied at our weakness.

On days that were not market days, or swimming days, or running days, we visited our grandmothers. I had three--my grandmother who lived in Knox Street and fed us gingersnaps and Foxes' Mints, and sometimes gave us pennies; my great-grandmother who was so

old she remembered the Potato Famine and the people dead by the roadside with grass-stained mouths. Her stories were all sad. And then there was my Ardnaree Granny. I was her favorite grandchild, I think, for I was the one who cut her right-hand fingernails, and to whom she solemnly promised that she should leave her shoes and sixpence when she died. The shoes were so small they fitted me even then.

But more than shoes or sixpences we loved Granny's stories. She always told them by firelight and, as she talked, Fionn and Oisin and Oscar leaped the great leap of the Fianna in the Flames before us; fairies and pucas gamboled on the hearth; witches and banshees wailed from the sooty-black chimney. From Granny we heard all the legends about our town--how Ardnaree had once been the hill where the kings of Connaught held their court and sometimes on winter nights you could still hear the royal horn sounding through the old Abbey, calling ghostly nobles to attend on their king; how "The Monument" at the end of the town marked the passing of the brave army that landed at Killala Bay in 1798 under General Humbert, and marched the whole width of Ireland before they were defeated by the Sasanchs. And best of all, how the hill behind Granny's house once sheltered the rebels during "the trouble times" and how one of them married my mother and there was great fighting in the family, but at last everyone decided that my father was all right in spite of being "on the run."

The memories of childhood are without order and without end and so I remember that never was there such a town as ours for football matches on Sunday afternoons, when lorry loads of Ballycastle men or Bonniconlon men came shouting through King Street--"Up Ballycastle!" or "Up Bonniconlon!" and our red and green shirted Ballina team marched to Saint Stephen's Park with all of us cheering so loud we drowned out the Ballina Brass Band.

Never was there such a town as ours for crowds in the streets on Fair Days and cattle and sheep and pigs all squeezed together in Garden Street, and shopkeepers running out every few minutes to tell a bargaining farmer to take his animal "out o' that" or he would have to pay for a broken window; for long funerals passing through Bridge Street with all the blinds drawn on the shops and the whole town walking behind Hewson's hearse to the tolling of the "dead bell" from the Cathedral.

Sometimes Mr. Willis, the bellringer, would take one or two of us with him up the spiral stairs into the inky depths of the Cathedral tower. Then we could look at the thin sliver of town that came in through the slits in the top tower, and as the great clanging of the bells rolled around us we would point out to one another the curling line of smoke from the chimneys all the way down from Convent Hill

to the river, and wonder again how the smokestack of the sugar factory was able to stand so straight without anything to hold it up. On days that were not schooldays Mr. Willis would never take us climbing with him but would chase us away after Mass with "Off with ye, or I'll tell the nun on ye." And away we would run, up the town, up the Convent Hill to where lessons and music and poetry and the nuns waited.

Never was there such a school as ours, for great blazing fires on rainy days and milk bottles heating and sometimes bursting and spilling all over the floor. The nuns taught us sums and reading in Irish and English and after school they taught us Irish dancing in "the Veranda." Long lines of us danced "The Blackbird" and the double-jig and then we changed into our dancing pumps to do the slip-jig and the reel. All of us played at lunch time behind the Convent wall. We swapped lunches and played our poetry games. "Thump, Thump" went the soggy skipping rope on the wet path as we chanted our poems, while the skipper jumped in time to our rhythm. First round of skipping were done to "easy" poems;

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather.
High on the hill-top
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist,
Columcill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

You were out if you missed a jump on a long accent, and the best skipper was the one who could not be got out even on "The Stolen Child." I remember that that was our favorite poem all during the sixth grade. We loved saying it so much that sometimes we would not even stop to put a wrong skipper out, but would chant away, bewitched by the music and the pictures. Never were there such lovely lines, we thought, as

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night;
Weaving olden dances
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;

To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.

And never was I so proud as the day I came to school and was able to boast, "My father took us to Glencar, and Lissadell and Knocknarea, and I saw the 'wandering water' and the clouds 'bundled' over Queen Maeve's grave!"

The memories of childhood are without order and so I remember that never were there such days as the holiday on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in June when half the town took the morning bus to Enniscrone and slept and sunned and played all day on the three-mile strand, and the other half went down the river to Bartra, out across the bar to where the Moy became the Atlantic, and back again when we had tasted the salt; up home between the dark trees at Beleek, where the tombstones of the hounds of the demesne rose in even lines along the bank; past the quay and the trawlers and merchant ships from places that were then only dots on the map to us, and back before dark to the steps below the bridge, where, if you were in your bare feet, you could feel the slippery green river-moss between your toes.

Occasionally now, when California January has the flavor of Irish May, I dream that I am sitting in the bow of Uncle Mick's boat, and I say to my family, "I've got a poem!" And because we liked to make up our own rhymes and say them to one another, I hear myself whispering rich lovely sounds like sea-winds ruffling the white hair of the salmon-rich Moy. I chant of waterfalls and tinkers' roars and giants' laughter; of silvery sixpences and small shoes and thumping skipping ropes. And then we all chant together my Ardnaree Granny's Favorite lullaby.

The angels are stooping
Above your bed;
They weary of trooping
With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in Heaven
To see you so good;
The Sailing Seven
Are gay with his mood.

I sigh that kiss you,
For I must own
That I shall miss you
When you have grown.

The memories of childhood are without order and without end.

Strategy

Here at dark of dawn
We meet in secret
To hold God's last city,
Recapture lost, forgotten dreams,
As Bethlehem descends to Calvary again.

Here the unseen light
Holds court and plans
A subtle web of invasions,
A scheme of tender maneuvers directed
Toward capturing the universe.

Here there is slight movement
And no sound save that
Of a tiny alarm of a bell
Unheard outside these walls by those
Who have no ears to hear.

Sister Mona Ann

Beatnik Poems

. . . by a Harried Student

Severe severance passion sensed,
flimsy flakes white floundering --
excites extracts anguish extreme
go, going forever gone.
Response resigned sans rescue.
(In other words -- Oops!
Broke another fingernail.)

OPUS I

Herald time hesitates in the shadow
pulsing plodding penalized
Cat speed conquered exiles self
caught consigned concealed
World end annihilated to the now
spurned scorned scourged
Flame quick consummation is o'er-shadowed
by deep-breathing storm delay.
(When is this class
ever going to end?)

OPUS II

The uncoming, the uncoming caught on tinted threads of tears
where is the now? -- voracious time flies
scepter scented calls the unfound -
unparted triumphs with queen probable
impotent stars watch lonely caverns of impatience
(Help! My zipper's stuck.)

OPUS III

Margaret Garnand '63

Judy Harris '63

Speech Distortions in the Inferno

The first reading of Dante's Inferno usually leaves the reader too conscious of the aspect of horror which permeates this place to realize the various methods Dante employs to attain the effect. One technique he uses is that of deprivation. Many of the souls we find here have been deprived, each according to his own particular sin, of one or more of the attributes of their human natures.

Since speech is one of the things that distinguishes man from the lower animals, Dante uses a lack or distortion of this power in certain cases to reveal the souls' present debased state.

Following the pattern of threes that he uses throughout the Divine Comedy, Dante utilizes speech distortions three times in the Inferno: in the fifth, seventh, and eighth circles. I will present each of these cases, and show what the distortion is and why Dante uses it each time.

The first example is found in the fifth circle, where the sullen and angry are punished. They are bemired in the muddy Styx, over which Dante is crossing. The angry are visible, and while Dante is watching them intently, he notices bubbles on the surface of the river. Virgil tells him that under the water "there are people sighing and making bubbles on the surface" (Inf. 3:118-119, Huse tr.).

Virgil goes on to explain that while they cannot be understood, the sullen are talking:

> Fixed in the slime they say, 'Sullen were we
> in the sweet air gladdened by the sun,
> keeping within us the fumes of spite;
> now we are sullen in the black mire.'
> This hymn is gurgled in their throats,
> for they cannot speak in clear words (7:121-126).

It is apparent that words cannot be understood because of the gurgling. Carroll, a Dante commentator, explains Dante's probable meaning as a punishment for the souls' laziness and lack of interest while alive. He points out that during the Middle Ages, certain priests, whose duty it was to chant hymns in church, were often so lazy that they didn't even pronounce words articulately.

Dante has the souls punished by their sins, and now they gurgle their laments in their throats.

Further down in hell, in the wood of negation, is found the second example. Here, their souls encased in trees, are those Christians who have committed suicide. By denying their human nature, they are destined to an eternity of inhabiting the form of a lower nature.

Dante hears moans on entering the forest, but can see no one. Virgil instructs him to break a branch from one of the many trees. When he does, Dante is surprised to hear the plant speak and reproach him:

> Then I stretched forth my hand
> and plucked a small branch from a great thorn
> tree, and its trunk cried, "Why do you break
> me"? (13:31-33).

Unlike the sullen, the suicides can be understood, but only if they have a chance to speak. If some outlet is provided, these souls are rendered intelligible:

> As a green log, burning at one end,
> drips from the other and hisses
> with the steam that escapes,
> so from the broken branch words and blood
> came out together (13:40-45).

We see, however, that the souls retain the characteristics of their newly acquired nature. When speaking, they do so with trouble, as the words must be forced out with the blood which wells from their wounds.

The punishment of the evil counselors, in the eighth circle, constitutes the last example. These people have turned their intellects and the powers of their minds away from God towards the "wisdom of the world." According to Dante, whenever this perversion of the intellect from God takes place in any form, it involves the soul in an agony of fire. Accordingly, we find the evil counselors enveloped in tongues of fire.

Dante first approaches a flame engulfing two men:

> The greater horn of the ancient flame
> began to shake murmuring like fire
> struggling in the wind,
>
> then moving the tip here and there,

as it were a tongue speaking,
it formed words (26:85-90).

The trouble incurred by the souls is further evident from the second flame which attempts to speak:

As the Sicilian bull. . .
bellowed with the voice of the tortured
in such a way that, although it was of brass,
it seemed transfixed with pain,

so, not having any opening or outlet
from their sources in the fire,
the doleful words were transformed into its
language (27:7, 10-15).

The evil counselors have the hardest time of those in the three examples in trying to be understood, probably because they occupy a lower place and are punished for a graver sin. They struggle constantly, as though against a heavy wind.

In all three cases, the punished souls have abused the power of speech: the sullen, by using it improperly and morosely; the suicides by depriving themselves of it; and the evil counselors, by turning this power away from God and using it for earthly gains.

Dante, as Carroll says in his book on the Inferno, shows "that the abuse of the power of speech is punished by the withdrawal of it. [The soul] cannot utter and reveal itself; by the abuse of it, the tongue has closed in around the soul and refuses to express its thoughts."

To English - At Last

What started it all
Was a clarion-call
To an erlenmeyer sulphur yellow

But sulphur is dead,
And frigid is lead,
For the 'living' I'd cry, O I'd bellow!

So next I would nourish
With vigor and flourish
My petri plate's miniscule fellow

But he had no head,
So he couldn't have said
A friendly good-morning or hello.

Then pained I did cringe
With sponge and syringe
With compassion my heart it did mellow,

But finally I find
I've leapt into a kind
Of swimming pool filled up with jello.

I'm up to my ears,
I'm nearly in tears
With Heathcliff, and Faust, and Othello,

Here I'll stay 'til I'm through,
For it's sad, but it's true,
I have run out of words ending 'ello.'

Celine Hatcher '62

Last Mark

A day of endings came at last when earth
was made fast against what;
    rock and earth indecisive and unsteady
    each soul unready in some way at this
day of dark and every day its mark.

First there were three trees, then
there were four
    Air was once to breathe; now it hunts the lungs
    to ashes; water pours its vinegar on new wounds
The sky crashes through and around;
and buried things are found.

And man has closed the blind to sun and run
to the right or walked to the left of the light;
    the moorings of earth are loose to its fruition;
    the plan for which the possible was born;
now no morning and no night; they have done;
the owners of the dead have won.

Judy Krommer '63

Collette Boland

Dante's Return to Paradise

The Divine Comedy is universally esteemed as a poetic masterpiece. It tells of the wanderings of Dante's soul, which represents mankind, in hell, purgatory, and heaven. After reading the work, one cannot help recognizing one of the poet's fundamental aims--to give the incentive to save his own immortal soul. As he says in a letter: "It can be briefly stated that the aim of the whole and of the part [of the Divine Comedy] is to remove those living in this life from a state of misery, and to guide them to a state of happiness." Here Dante clearly states his apostolic purpose--to guide others to a state of happiness.

However, not only is he concerned with saving the souls of others, but Dante Alighieri, the historical Florentine, assures us that he himself will reach heaven. These assurances come at three distinct times in the Comedy--once in hell, once in purgatory, and once in heaven. In each part, Dante the poet states with certainty that he will return to paradise.

The first instance occurs at the very beginning of Dante's journey in a surprisingly allegorical setting. His soul is lost in a dark wood, representing worldliness or sin. As he attempts to escape this evil forest by climbing a sunlit hill, Dante's hopes are thwarted by three wild beasts.

First a leopard, the symbol of lust or luxury, appears, followed by a lion, the symbol of pride, and finally a she-wolf, the symbol of avarice or greed. Suddenly, Dante sees the shade of Virgil. The ancient pagan poet offers to guide the troubled soul through hell and purgatory, saying, "I think it best for you to follow me" (Inf. 1:111, Huse tr.). As Virgil relates the course of the journey, he mentions that in heaven there will be a new guide, Beatrice. Dante willingly accepts the invitation with the words:

> Poet, I beg you by that God you did not know, in order that I may flee from this evil and worse, take me where you have said, so that I may see St. Peter's gate and those you proclaim so sad (Inf. 1:130-135).

Dante is willing to make the wearisome trip through hell and purgatory so that he "may flee from this evil and worse." Looking

at this quotation, we find a subtle assurance of Dante's ultimate salvation. If the words "this evil" are understood to mean earthly darkness and, perhaps a physical death at the hands of wild animals, then we see the "worse" evil as a spiritual evil. It is the death of the soul, which is killed by serious sin. So when Dante the Florentine asks Virgil to take him on the journey that he may flee from this "worse" evil, the poet is hinting that he will ultimately escape the eternal death of the damned soul. He will also escape the place of everlasting darkness, hell, and consequently will attain heaven.

We find a second, more definite assurance of Dante's being saved, again, in a part of the Comedy that is allegorical. He has moved through purgatory and has undergone many of its punishments. Beatrice has met Dante the pilgrim and is now preparing him for the joys of heaven.

While the two stand on the threshold of paradise, many symbolic visions of Christ, his saints, and the Church appear. Soon Dante falls asleep, and when he wakens, Christ has returned to heaven. The symbolic Church is now left alone with Beatrice, who prepares Dante for the next vision. It will depict the history of the early Church, with her many persecutions and heresies. Beatrice directs the poet to observe the coming scenes carefully, and through her words, Dante the Florentine assures us of his salvation.

> You will be for a while a forest dweller and
> then you will be with me forever a citizen
> of that Rome in which Christ is a Roman.
> Therefore for the good of the badly living world,
> keep your eyes on the chariot, and be careful
> that you write down what you see after you
> return (Purg. 32:100-109).

The words, "You will be for a while a forest dweller," have a particular significance in this part of the Comedy. According to Carroll, a Dante commentator, "The forest where [Dante] now is, and in particular the tree, is the symbol of the empire; and at its best it is but a symbol, and not of the eternal city." It is a temporary dwelling. This prediction, therefore, might justly be taken to mean that Dante will be on earth "for a while;" that is, until he dies.

"And then you will be with me forever a citizen of that Rome in which Christ is a Roman." To Dante the Florentine, a re-established Roman Empire was the answer to many of the problems of his day. In fact, a large portion of his treatise, De Monarchia, is devoted to proving that the Romans, as the noblest people on earth, had a right to a world empire. Indeed, Dante believed the Romans to be God's "chosen people," and their city became the earthly symbol of the celestial city--heaven. He hoped in "...that mighty Roman

Empire which was destined of Heaven to be the seat and home of that faith on earth." As Carroll says, it "was the duty of the Emperor to create and maintain an Earthly Paradise."

When Beatrice, Dante's symbol of revelation, says that he will be a citizen, an active resident, of this celestial Rome, of which Christ Himself is a citizen, she really prophesies the great poet's eternal salvation.

The third assurance, which is a very obvious one, that Dante will reach heaven may be found in the Paradiso. He and Beatrice have just risen to the heaven of Mars. The soldiers of the holy crusades have appeared with their white cross, when suddenly the shade of Cacciaguida, Dante's great-great grandfather moves toward the two very rapidly. Cacciaguida's salutation to Dante, which is spoken in Latin, is a true foretelling of the poet's future.

> O blood of mine, O grace of God lavishly
> poured forth! To whom was Heaven's gate
> ever twice opened as to you? (Parad. 15:28-30).

Cacciaguida was Dante's real, historical relative. So his words are spoken to the historical Florentine Dante, not to Dante as a symbol of mankind. The opening of Heaven's gate twice, therefore, refers to the present entrance and the one at his death. As Dante has told us earlier, he is making this journey in order that he may return here again. These words of Cacciaguida assure him of his personal eternal victory.

Dante as the master of allegorical writing has made his Comedy appealing to everyone. For in this work, he symbolically makes each reader the principal character, who sees vividly the evil of sin and its horrible consequences. However, by examining three related quotations--one from each part of the Comedy, the Inferno, the Purgatorio, and the Paradiso, we have seen that Dante, the historical poet, has really told us something of himself in the expression of these guarantees of his own salvation. These assurances have also shown the pilgrim's progress through the poem.

Dante's own speech in the Inferno demanded allegorical consideration, because his reference to a future salvation was camouflaged. In hell his mind was darkened by sin and distracted by its complications.

The words of Beatrice in the Purgatorio indicated a step in Dante's spiritual growth. The poet was prepared to enter heaven; the fog had nearly lifted from his soul and its powers. The prophecy of Beatrice was more literal, yet it still needed some allegorical interpretation.

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Child's Gift

Face prints on the glass,
Cold breath cuts the air.
"Wish I had a ginger man.
They look so good in there."

Nickel left from shopping.
"I'll buy one for a treat."
Bell rings at Santa's touch.
Hungry boy crosses street.

Sally Spriggs '61

An Irish Christmas

'Tis Christmas Eve in Ireland
soft emeralds dipped in snow;
each home--a starry lantern
guides the Family in its glow.

From candle-haloed window
flows a warmth to welcome Him;
each burning flame--a metaphor
of heart and hearth within.

Sister Mary Sean

A Christmas Acrostic

Chapel memory:

Hayfull manger

Reaped in light.

Is man willing?

Stars caressing

Trail to Infant;

Myrrh from wisdom

Aids mankind.

Salvation.

Linda Feinberg '61

Judy Krommer '63

Losses

Singing a song without a premise and just
a doubt that we sing or weep or know some things
too deep to know
we know the superficial deep or make our excuses
and lose ourselves in the loss even of that;

The love that springs from the shallows swells
into as many surface hells as there are souls and
controls the lyric;

And some empirical force vows not to die but
with the arabesque conclusion of a hymn gives
the preliminary note and lies about
the mote in its own eye until
the dimming time.

Lillian Money

The Terrible Two

It was during the second week of February that Sister Mary Catherine fell down the basement steps of the convent and broke her hip.

Sister Mary Martha found her, a crumpled little heap of black robes, emitting an occasional apologetic moan, and summoned Sister Superior.

After a brief period of the hushed activity that passes for chaos in a convent, during which Sister Mary Catherine was moved to St. Vincent's Hospital and given over into the gentle hands of the doctors and nursing sisters, Sister Superior and her remaining charges gathered to decide what to do about the second grade at St. Monica's school.

They went over a list of possible substitutes for Sister.

Mrs. Morgan? Mrs. Morgan was teaching at St. Brigid's.

Miss Givens? Miss Givens was getting married on Tuesday next and would be honeymooning in Canada.

Miss Monroe? Sister Superior thought not Miss Monroe.

Mrs. Williams? Mrs. Williams had a new baby, her third in three years.

Sister Superior sighed softly. "There must be SOMEONE!"

Sister Mary Michael raised a tentative hand.

"Yes, Sister?"

"Well, Sister, there's Miss Thomas --- Margaret Thomas. She came home from school to take care of her mother when Mrs. Thomas had that heart attack, and she isn't going back until next year. Mrs. Thomas is pretty well now, and I'm sure Margaret has enough credits for an emergency credential. Of course, she's awfully young. . . ." Sister Mary Michael finished, and had the grace to blush. Sister Mary Michael herself looked all of nineteen.

And so they chose Miss Thomas.

After the first flush of pleasure, and her eager acceptance, Miss Thomas felt herself becoming thoroughly frightened. Practice teaching had been one thing with an experienced and helpful sister at her elbow, but taking on a whole roomful of second graders in mid-year, that was quite another. And especially Sister Mary Catherine's class!

Throughout the parish parents spoke with awe of Sister Catherine's accomplishments. It was said that you could visit Sister Cath-

erine's room at any hour of the day, and hear a pin drop. Clear out in the hall. There were never any wigglers in the second grade rows at Mass, and no stragglers in the second grade marching line.

Since these same children came, wiggly and giggly, from first grade, and progressed to more wiggling and giggling in third, it could only be assumed that their superior deportment while in second grade had something to do with Sister Mary Catherine. Parents were reluctant to intrude far enough into the ordered quiet of the second grade room to learn Sister's control secrets -- they were content to know she had them.

Whatever her methods, they worked. To a child the second grade would have lain down and expired for Sister if she had asked them to. Miss Thomas prayed that she would be able to handle her new job.

At the head of the second grade line the next morning, Miss Thomas wondered if the children could see her knees shaking.

They marched into the church with their customary decorum, and were, as usual, attentive and serene during Mass. They marched back into the school and took their seats without a single misstep. They sat with their hands folded and looked steadily at Miss Thomas standing there where Sister Mary Catherine should have been.

Miss Thomas mentally hitched up the straps of her poise and explained that Sister had met with a small accident and would be in the hospital for a little while, during which time she -- Miss Thomas --would help them with their work.

They knelt and prayed fervently for Sister's recovery. They resumed their seats and folded their hands.

By recess time Miss Thomas was wondering what she'd been so scared about. "They're wonderful," she said.

The second grade continued to live up to its reputation for exemplary behavior for two days. The third morning there was a fine mist in the air, and a stiff wind blowing. And any primary teacher will tell you that she dreads a windy day. It whips up restless imps in all the children, and anything can happen.

The children had hardly lined up for the march into the church when it began. Michael Andrews, who had been standing second in line, behind Peter Beeson, decided that he had actually been FIRST in line and that Peter had "taken cuts." Michael elbowed himself firmly into first place, kicking Peter a resounding whack on the way: Peter's wail was a small siren on the wind.

Miss Thomas turned. Michael was now first in line, the sobbing Peter second, hopping on one foot and doing his best to convey the impression that he had sustained a broken leg. Miss Thomas hastily moved Michael back into his original place. Peter smugly headed the line again, his broken leg miraculously healed. Michael

scowled. He walked firmly on Peter's heels. Peter kicked back. Michael dodged and stumbled. Miss Thomas looked back, and the small conflict subsided.

Having seen the sterling behavior of her charges at Mass for two days, Miss Thomas had relaxed her guard. Intent upon her own prayers she hardly noticed two heads bending closer and closer at the end of the row. A tiny giggle roused her and a sharp glance in its direction revealed the cause. Michael again -- and Peter. Their previous difficulties forgotten, they were now intent on a huge spider which they had discovered and were trying to guide along the top of the pew in front of them. The spider was being most uncooperative. It kept trying to escape and slip down the sloping back of the pew. Michael captured it with a swift, deft pounce. Miss Thomas shuddered. She loathed spiders, and this one was a monster.

The boys continued to torment their captive through the Consecration. By now the entire row was aware of their activity. It seemed to Miss Thomas that every supervisory eye in the church was on the little scene. She could feel the back of her neck growing hot.

At the end of Mass as the children rose to leave, the spider dropped to the floor. Michael's eyes were on Miss Thomas, his face angelic and smiling, but even as he smiled his foot reached out and planted itself firmly on the insect. There was a soft, squishy sound and Miss Thomas felt a small spasm in her throat. She looked away.

"Had I better talk to them?" she asked herself, and decided that she had.

In the room, she said, "Michael Andrews and Peter Beeson, I want to see you at recess. Please stay in the room for a few minutes."

There was a delighted scuffling among the other children. Michael and Peter exchanged wary glances.

Before recess came, Miss Thomas had found out that it had been a mistake to speak so soon. With all that time to speculate on what she might be going to do, Michael found it hard to concentrate on his work.

While she guided the Bluebird reading group through a story about Billy Calf's adventures, Michael was making no effort to finish the work she had assigned to his group. She moved to his side and bent to whisper in his ear so as not to disturb Patty McGowan's reading.

"Why aren't you working, Michael?"

The return whisper was piercing. "I AIN'T GOT NO PENCIL."

Patty stopped reading, all the other Bluebirds lost the place,

and the rest of the class turned to watch as Miss Thomas found a pencil and gave it to Michael.

"Go on, Patty." The Bluebirds returned to Billy Calf, and Michael's curly red head bent to his work.

A page farther in Billy's adventures, with Walter Callahan reading, Miss Thomas saw that Michael had stopped again. This time she dispensed with the whisper and interrupted Walter rudely.

"Michael, why aren't you working?"

"I ain't got no pencil."

A little titter ran around the room. The Bluebirds lost the place again. Miss Thomas suppressed a desire to whack Michael over the head with the book she was holding. She kept her voice calm.

"What happened to the pencil I just gave you?"

"I dunno, Miss Thomas. I can't FIND it." Michael's wrinkled brow was the picture of innocence.

Together they searched. There was no pencil. It was not in his desk, or on the floor, or in his clothing -- at least not so far as Miss Thomas could tell without disrobing him. The pencil, bright yellow and a good seven inches long, had disappeared into thin air. She produced another, a somewhat weatherbeaten stubby little pencil and handed it to Michael. The Bluebirds hastily searched for the place and Walter resumed reading.

Denise Perkins was reading when Miss Thomas noticed that Michael was again idle. There was no pencil in sight on his desk. His expression as his eyes met hers was bland, waiting. Miss Thomas opened her mouth, then closed it. "Oh, no, you don't!" she said to herself. Michael looked disappointed but he did not admit defeat. He did not produce the pencil, but sat weaving his fingers together, apart, together, apart, until the recess bell rang.

The rest of the class filed out, casting backward glances at the two who remained in their seats. When they were alone, Miss Thomas spoke about the spider. The boys were very cooperative and properly repentant. They agreed that it was wrong to torture one of God's creatures, and particularly in God's own house.

"No, Miss Thomas," they said sweetly, and "Yes, Miss Thomas," and "I'm sorry, Miss Thomas," until she excused them, sure of their repentance. They beat a hasty retreat.

"Boy, did he SQUISH!" said Peter, rapturously, at the door.

Miss Thomas gave up.

After recess it was Peter's turn.

From the classroom windows they could see the portly figure of Father Briggs moving slowly up the walk. Miss Thomas cast a nervous eye over the room. Nothing out of place. They were ready for Father's visit.

Peter raised a frantic hand. He stood up.

"I don't FEEL good," he whined, and gulped.

Miss Thomas was torn between this emergency and the knowledge that Father was undoubtedly within yards of the door.

"Run out to the bathroom, Peter -- the back way. I'll be out in just a few minutes, dear."

Peter fled, hand clapped over mouth, and as his hurrying figure disappeared through one door Father's sedate knock sounded at the other.

Father Briggs loved to visit the classrooms. He came from Ireland where he had surely been on speaking terms with every elf and fairy and banshee in the land. The children knew a kindred soul when they saw one. They would have kept him talking all day.

Miss Thomas hardly heard a word Father said. Her mind was full of Peter, sick and miserable in the boys' washroom. Nervously she walked to the windows and looked over the playground.

There, hanging by his knees from the monkey bars, was Peter. While she watched, horrified, he began to perform some astonishing gymnastics. Even knowing that he could be seen from every room in the building, Miss Thomas was forced to admire his daring. One thing was clear -- no upset stomach could possibly have withstood the ups and downs and overs through which Peter was hurling his sturdy small body.

Father Briggs finished his talk with the children, gave them his blessing, and left. Agonized, Miss Thomas watched him cross the playground and speak to her small gymnast. Peter answered Father's remarks with great courtesy, pointing in the direction of Miss Thomas' room. After a gentle swat on the seat of the pants from the kindly old priest, Peter trotted up the walk and came back into the classroom flushed and smiling.

"I feel BETTER now," he announced.

"I'll just BET you do!" Miss Thomas thought, grimly. She could think of nothing she dared say out loud.

At lunch time she joined Miss Peters who had taught fourth grade six years and was inclined to be a little condescending.

"Father visit your room this morning?" she asked brightly.

Miss Thomas took a careful sip of coffee. "Yes."

Miss Peters grinned. "How're you getting along with The Terrible Two?"

"Who?" Almost as she spoke, Miss Thomas knew the identity of the Terrible Two. Who else?

"Terrible," she laughed ruefully. "Who named them that?"

Miss Peters smiled back. "Sister Loretta when she had them in first. After they set off the fire alarm twice, stuffed all the towels down the drain and brought a dead mouse into the room."

"But don't let them get you down," Miss Peters finished.

Miss Thomas tried. She tried very hard. She reminded herself a thousand times that patience is the first requisite of a good teacher, she resolved that she would not be trapped into losing her temper. Gentleness could handle any child, she was sure, and gentle she would be if it killed her.

The trouble was that as Michael and Peter continued their small campaign, their attitude began to spread through the rest of the class, like ripples on a pond. There was now nothing to distinguish the second grade line from any other. They pushed, and pulled, and giggled, just as if they had never known how to stand quietly. Pencils vanished off desks, crayons were mysteriously broken, rubber bands flew through the air, miniature cars and trucks were garaged in desks, tasty pieces of cake disappeared from lunch sacks, overshoes were mixed up and had to be sorted out while the school bus honked impatiently. There was a rash of tattling, and small cliques blossomed. No recess or lunch period went by without a report that Patty and Barbara and Maureen weren't speaking to Sally, and that Henry, John and the McKinley twins wouldn't share the kick ball with the others.

"I'm doing everything WRONG," she wailed to her father. "There must be some way to handle them!"

"There is," he remarked from behind his newspaper and a cloud of pipe smoke, "but I understand you aren't allowed to use it any more."

"Oh, you!" she retorted, and went upstairs to lie down.

The next day Peter scored another mark. He rose, slightly green, and sought her attention. "I don't FEEL well," he murmured.

"And this is where I came in," thought Miss Thomas. She looked Peter squarely in the eye. "Peter," she said gently, "I can see Father Briggs coming up the walk, too. I don't think you are really very sick. Please sit down and if you still feel ill after Father has gone you may be excused".

The class gasped. Peter seemed abashed for a moment, then he made a slight gagging noise and promptly threw up.

Miss Thomas was horrified. And thoroughly repentant. How could she have been so callous? She dispatched a shocked Henry for the janitor, then delegated Marshall Sims to accompany Peter to the bathroom.

Father Briggs, at the door, took in the situation with one glance and murmured that he would return another time. Gratefully Miss Thomas went ahead with the business of moving the nearest children and helping the janitor restore the room to its normal condition.

She looked through her register for Peter's telephone number. His mother would surely be angry, and justly so, when she heard

what had happened. Miss Thomas was already framing her apologies in her mind when Peter and Marshall returned. Peter was no longer even faintly green. He seemed thoroughly refreshed. Possibly this was due to the amount of water he had used as a restorative. His head and shoulders were soaking wet. Marshall had obviously either been in the way, or had participated in the treatment, as he too was drenched.

"I feel BETTER, now," Peter informed the class. He marched back to his seat, the picture of health, and gave Miss Thomas a long triumphant smile.

Michael had evidently decided that Peter had held the spotlight long enough. In various ways he diverted attention to himself. He hummed through his teeth, without moving a muscle of his throat or mouth. Whenever Miss Thomas came near, the humming stopped. All day the monotonous little drone kept on. He picked up the ruler Rory Stevens dropped and managed to break it as he returned it to its owner. Rory howled. He tipped Stanley's thermos over at lunch spraying milk and broken glass over several classmates. He pulled Theresa's long black braids and threw away one of the ribbons that anchored them. Theresa howled. He held up his hand during arithmetic class and when called on gave completely ridiculous answers. This inspired several others, even Marshall Sims who was usually dead serious about numbers.

Miss Thomas sent for Mrs. Andrews and Mrs. Beeson. Mrs. Beeson sent a note to school with Peter the next day saying that she had meetings of the Amateur Gardeners' club, the Civic Betterment League and the Thursday Afternoon Literary group, but that she would get in touch with Miss Thomas "at a later date".

"Coward," thought Miss Thomas.

Mrs. Andrews put in an appearance. She was a large, firmly packed, matronly kind of woman, who whirled her large sedan into a parking space just six inches longer than the car, jockeyed it deftly into place, slammed the door behind her and bore down upon Miss Thomas' door like a battleship under full steam. Michael bobbed along in her wake, looking both gleeful and apprehensive.

As tactfully as possible Miss Thomas outlined her troubles with Michael. Mrs. Andrews listened politely until she was sure Miss Thomas had ceased firing before releasing her own broadside.

Mrs. Andrews simply could not understand the problem, as Michael was and had always been such a SHY child. It was apparent from her recital that Mrs. Andrews could quote whole pages of psychology, and that every page convinced her the trouble lay NOT with the child, but elsewhere. She inquired if Miss Thomas had been teaching long.

Miss Thomas flushed. "Not long, Mrs. Andrews. But I assure

you that I have tried to understand Michael's behavior....."

"I simply do not understand it," Mrs. Andrews interrupted. "Sister Mary Catherine NEVER has had any trouble with Michael! Of course, Mr. Andrews and I understand -- quite -- the problems the school is facing, what with crowded classes, and the shortage of teachers....." Her expression indicated that she thought they were already scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Miss Thomas retired as gracefully as possible, to lick her wounds. For the rest of the day she observed evidences of Michael's shyness with a slightly jaundiced eye.

Two weeks went by and Mrs. Beeson still had not appeared. Peter reported that she was occupied with the Girl Scout Board, the Better Government committee and her art class. Miss Thomas decided to let well enough alone.

On a miserable, raw Thursday morning, Miss Thomas awoke to a slight sore throat, and a dull headache. "Oh, goody! Maybe I'm sick," she thought. But the thermometer showed a cool 98.6°, so she dressed and went down to breakfast. The school yard was bleak and cold, her classroom looked dim and uninviting.

Just after recess Miss Thomas looked up and saw Father Briggs bundling along against the raw wind. Peter saw, too. At once he was on his feet, limp hand waving.

"I don't FEEL well, Miss Thomas? May I go to the bathroom?"

For an instant Miss Thomas saw her class through a thin veil of red mist. Something hot and angry churned in her stomach. Peter's face was becoming greener by the minute, his throat muscles were working dangerously.

"No - you - may - not!" Miss Thomas heard herself saying. At least she supposed it must be herself talking, though she hardly recognized the voice. It was a tone she had never used to any child, and it surprised Peter, too.

"I'll throw up," he promised, and gagged slightly.

Miss Thomas stood up and tossed caution to the winds. "You DO that!" she urged softly. "You - just - do - that! And then you may get some paper towels and clean up every - single - speck. All by - yourself!"

Cold grey eyes bored into astonished brown ones. The rest of the class sat frozen. Peter sat down. Presently he lowered his eyes and began a fascinated scrutiny of his clasped hands.

Father Briggs arrived and addressed a class suddenly quiet and attentive. Peter was still finding his hands absorbing. Michael sat up straight and paid strict attention.

As soon as Father had gone, Miss Thomas stood up and tried out her new voice.

"The Robins may take out their readers," she said, making it

continued on p. 33

Virginia Speltz '64

Fog

Fog is a hairnet

Covers the drinking flower

Smoothes wild strands of grass

Mary Menke '64

Wind comes suddenly

whips your hair, and then

blows on its way

Virginia Speltz '64

Waterfall

Water down mountain

Rippling and wrinkling as silk

Blues at the bottom

Jane Lueke '64

Autumn

Leaves rustle in the

soft autumn wind impatiently

awaiting the rain.

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continued from p. 19

In paradise, the sanctified Dante was capable of complete understanding, without the use of allegory. Cacciaguida's words were blunt prophecy.

What could be more assuring than the author's words which he himself speaks in the Paradiso, in reference to his heavenly visit: "I hope to return, Reader" (Parad. 23:105).

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continued from p. 30

sound like something out of a gangster movie. The Robins hastened to obey.

Miss Thomas turned to Michael. "YOU will take a pencil out of whatever hiding place you've been using, and start your work. If it is not finished by lunch time you may stay right in your seat until it is finished. And if there is ONE SINGLE SOUND in your row the rest of the day you will have extra seatwork to do every recess and every lunch period the rest of this week."

Michael reached up under his shirt and from under his arm pit drew forth a short pencil.

"So that's where he hides them," Miss Thomas thought.

The Robins began their reading lesson in complete quiet. There was no disturbance of any kind the rest of the morning. The lunch period passed without incident. No milk was spilled. The line formed for wash-up in an orderly fashion.

Miss Thomas thought she would drop in at the hospital after school to see Sister Mary Catherine. They would have a lot to talk over.

Celine Hatcher '62

Learned Faustus, Accursed Faustus

"The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus" stands at a pivotal point in the forward surge of Elizabethan drama. When it was written, the world was in the grips of two opposing forces, each seemingly incompatible with the other. On the one hand were fifteen centuries of Christian moral and spiritual discipline. On the other was the new, mysterious, electrifying call of the Renaissance, the compulsion to explore with new-gained freedom "All things that move beyond the quiet poles."[1] Christopher Marlowe turns this conflict inward, and lets us watch while it wreaks havoc in a human soul. Interjecting the element of free will, Marlowe offers his play as the first true "Christian Tragedy."[2]

The play was a monumental success when it was first presented. This is understandable. The Elizabethans were fascinated by the "damnable black art," and often duped by the highly dramatic and frightening stage effects accompanying the performance. The passage of years has done nothing to diminish the play's appeal. Unlike the Elizabethans, though, we are not frightened by stage effects, awed by conjuration, or in wonder at the burgeoning promise of the Renaissance. Neither do we finish the play to learn the story, because the Chorus reveals it in the prologue:

> Swollen with cunning and self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And, melting, heavens conspired his overthrow;
> For, falling to a devilish exercise,
> And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
> He surfeits upon cursed necromancy (p. 3).

It is, I believe, the character of Doctor Faustus, in all its deep, ironic implications, wherein the greatness of this play resides. We regard with genuine pity the tragic hero, the learned Faustus, the "accursed Faustus," the man who rose so high, yet fell so low.

[1] Christopher Marlowe, "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus," Eight Famous Elizabethan Plays (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 5. All quotations unless otherwise footnoted are taken from this edition, and are referred to within the text by page.

[2] Richard B. Sewall, The Vision of Tragedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 57.

Marlowe's genius in the right use of all the tools of his art resulted in the colossus who is Faustus. I dare not tamper with his creation, wrench it piece from piece, revealing only the skeleton of a giant. I propose, rather to try to show you Faustus as he is - "the man that in his study sits" (p. 4). Marlowe placed Faustus in three frames. Faustus is first the superman, consumed with the desire to plumb the mysteries of the universe, to escape the confines of his human nature. Here he sins. He is next the superman torn between this inordinate desire and the slowly dawning realization of his true limitations. Here he struggles. Finally, Faustus is the man, fully aware of the limits of his reason and his nature, and the gravity of the sin he committed in trying to transcend them. Here he is damned. These divisions are but an arbitrary device. The transitions between them are smooth and almost imperceptible. They are meant only to clarify the overall view, the picture of Faustus the "divided soul."[3]

At the onset, Marlowe appropriately left Faustus alone in his study. Having already accomplished a superhuman task, Faustus is apart from men. In soliloquy he reveals his mastery of all the university "faculties," law, medicine, the liberal arts, logic. He must seek knowledge elsewhere. In an ironic move, he turns quickly to theology, and as quickly turns away. The doctrine that the "reward of sin is death" is his stumbling block. He reasons thus: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves....we must sin, and so consequently die. . . Divinity adieu!" (p. 5). What is left but magic? Here Faustus is enthralled.

> O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honor, of omnipotence....!
> ....A sound magician is a mighty God (pp. 5-6).

Faustus snatches his chance to break the bonds of his nature, to escape the confines of time and space and ignorance. Like Tennyson's "Ulysses," he yearns for the forbidden, "to follow knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought."[4] Thinking he has mastered conjuring, he marvels when Mephistophilis appears: "I see there's virtue in my heavenly words" (p. 11). The irony of his words is a vivid black on white reversal of the truth. Arrogant now, confident in his power, Faustus orders Mephistophilis as he would a servant. He is convinced that he is the true master of the situation. He utters a single, stinging sentence renouncing his dependence on God Himself: "The only God thou serv'st is thine own appetite" (p. 16).

Ibid., p. 59

[4]Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses," Selected Poetry of Tennyson, edited by Douglas Rush (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), p. 69.

Just as quickly, he scorns "these vain trifles of men's souls... Had I as many souls as there be stars, I'd give them all for Mephistophilis" (pp. 12-13). Signing his name in his own blood, he concludes the compact. For twenty-four years of life "in all voluptuousness," he trades his soul. It seems a one-sided bargain indeed. The darkest irony flows from the words he now utters, "Consummatum est," the words of Christ on the cross. He damns himself with the very phrase first spoken to save him. So it is that Faustus sins.

Marlowe paints Faustus in varying shades of gray as the allotted span of years rolls by. His arrogance and confidence giving way to worry and anxiety, Faustus vacillates and struggles. [5] At first his doubts are shadowed as quickly as they appear by his willful curiosity. In a single breath he jumps from one pole to another:

> But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears "Faustus, thou art damned!"
> I am resolved: Faustus shall never repent
> Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon? (p. 23).

But the higher his flights of inquiry, the closer he comes to truth and to repentance. In a scene suffused with hints of hope, Faustus asks the ultimate question: "Who made the world?" (p. 24). Answering, himself, that it was God, he cries, "Ah Christ my Savior, seek to save distressed Faustus's soul!" (p. 25). The God that he denied is acknowledged once again. It takes, not one, but three devils, Lucifer, Beelzebub and Mephistophilis, to quench this aspiration. And Faustus, renewing again his tragic choice, "vows never to name God or to pray to Him" (p. 25). Mephistophilis, the meek servant no longer, speaks with the sober sting of reality. "Think thou on hell Faustus, for thou art damned" (p. 24). Marlowe sketches the declining years of Faustus' life as an ever clearer, sharper dichotomy. Faustus' fame "spread forth in every land" (p. 32). Kings and emperors sought his services. No one in all the world had such magic, such mysterious powers, could conjure up the spirit of Alexander the Great, or produce a bunch of grapes in the snows of January. He had reached the glorious heights of evil strength. Yet, knowing in reality that he is but the epitome of impotence, he concedes, "What art thou Faustus, but a man condemned to die?" (p. 39). With these thoughts, Faustus struggles indeed.

In telling contrast, the light of truth proves infinitely more painful to Faustus than the darkness had been pleasant. To unify and frame the story, Marlowe places Faustus back in the study where this wretched business was begun. Faustus asks no ques-

[5] Sewall, op. cit., p. 63.

tions now. He sees. He sees that everything is just the reverse of the way he thought it to be. He is not a god or a giant, and he never had been. He is just a man. He is surrounded appropriately by the scholars he chose to abandon 24 years before. No longer haughty and arrogant, he speaks softly to an old man who begs him to repent:

> Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
> Thy words do comfort my distressed soul.
> Leave me a while to ponder on my sins (p. 44).

Not in the blinding heat of emotion, as earlier, but in the calm light of proud, unbending reason, he repeats the self-imposed sentence of his damnation: "I do repent; and yet I do despair" (p. 44). The irony of his conviction diffuses and darkens the final scene as Faustus acknowledges one by one the truths he cursed and denied in his youth. First, he admits his brotherhood with his fellowmen, pleading with the scholars to pray for him in his final agony. He sees the infinite value of the Saving Drops of the Redemption, which he had scorned with his own blood and his own "consummatum est." Calling on the mountains to bury him, the stars to enshroud him, Faustus shudders at "...the heavy wrath of God" (p. 49). He curses the immortality of his soul, the vain trifle he bartered so carelessly for 24 mortal years. A further contrast makes Faustus' final hour a deeper irony.[6] In eager anticipation, he had once called, "Is't not midnight? Veni Veni Mephistophile!" (p. 17). Now, utterly bound by the time he hoped to escape, he pleads the reverse:

> Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
> That time may cease, and midnight never come
> (p. 48).

But midnight comes, and with it the ever punctual Mephistophilis. He comes to claim the only reality involved in a totally one-sided bargain, the immortal soul of a mortal man. Such is the fate of Faustus, who believed he was an immortal man with a mortal soul.

[6] Perhaps the most famous line in the play, "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" takes on deep ironic overtones when its source is considered. Marlowe found a similar line in the Dialogue of the Dead, by Lucian. A character, coming upon the Skull of Helen, muses "And for this a thousand ships were launched from all Greece." John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1937), p. 133.

Nan Slattery '63

Slow Things Are Beautiful

Apologies to
Elizabeth Coatsworth

Slow things are beautiful:

Worms and snails,

And children who play

With shovels and pails,

Brooks and clouds,

Grass sprouting up,

The lazy gray mule,

The draining teacup.

to my creative writing teacher

I have found strange pleasure in
the wild cacaphony, the din
made by ravens black as sin. . .

What? You say you'd call them 'crows.'
But, Professor, everyone knows
'raven' makes a prettier sound!
Haven't you found
this out by now?
I don't see how
you've missed it. . .
You realize that my poem's intense
and thus conveys to all, immense
symbolic notions
through the oceans
of emotions--
Why mention then, I've never heard,
not even once, the big, bad bird?
You're most unkind; with gloom I see
again you don't agree with me--
Yet you are wise, of that I know,
and 'cacaphonic' does just go
somehow, with 'crow'
But really, who are you to say
that 'black as sin's' a foul cliché?
Oh all right then. O very well.
I'll make them 'crows, the shade of hell!'

Betsy Fleming '61

Critics

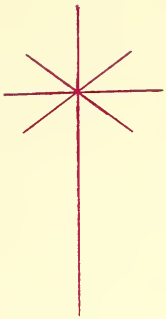
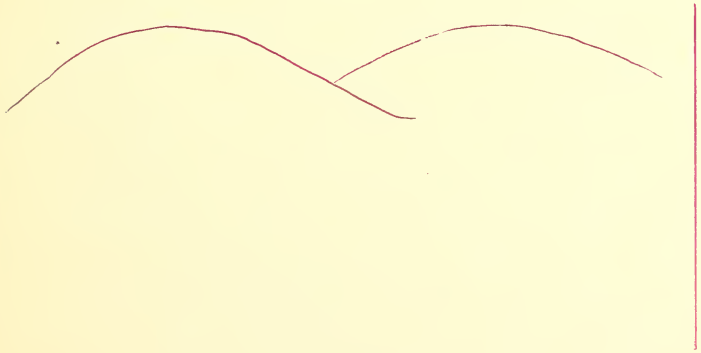
O inglorious fate; there's no gloomier doom than
to write something sooner than somebody else;
it's hated
berated
its artistic value is generally debated;
its simplest suggestion is openly questioned by
"don't care-ers" that turn into "tearers apart."

The rule is no question must ever be settled
no well-rhyming problem must ever be solved
With new routes discarded and old routes well guarded
the plan for an ancient young ode is evolved.

Write something archaic, something prosaic, something
that pleases mankind's finer tastes;
Write something that seems to be quietly ancient;
Write something respectful; write something that dates.

And then when the aura of reverence abates
it's more fun to write something that everyone hates.

Judy Krommer '63



for we have seen
his star in the east
and have come to
worship him ...
matt. 2:2